

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of handling page load errors, comprising:
detecting, at a user computing device that runs a web browser, that a browser request for a target web page has resulted in an error of a defined type;
transmitting an address of the target web page from the user computing device to an error processing server;
at the error processing server, using the address of the target web page to identify an alternate web page to display within the browser; and
causing the web browser to display the alternate web page in place of the requested target web page.
2. The method of Claim 1, further comprising displaying a message within the web browser indicating at least a source of the alternate web page.
3. The method of Claim 1, wherein the error of a defined type is a 404 error.
4. The method of Claim 1, wherein the error of a defined type is a timeout error in which host of the target web page fails to respond to the browser request within a selected time period.
5. The method of Claim 1, wherein the alternate web page is a cached version of the target web page.
6. The method of Claim 1, wherein the alternate web page is a web page retrieved from a URL that is deemed to be a replacement URL for the target web page.
7. The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of using the address of the target web page to identify an alternate web page comprise accessing a URL-to-URL mapping table that maps specific URLs to URLs of alternate web pages.
8. The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of using the address of the target web page to identify an alternate web page comprises comparing a target URL supplied by a user to URLs contained in a clickstream history of the user to evaluate whether the user mis-entered the target URL.
9. The method of Claim 1, wherein the alternate web page is generated dynamically by the error processing server system.

10. The method of Claim 9, wherein the dynamically-generated web page includes links to pages that are at least related to the target web page.

11. A system for handling page request errors, comprising:

an error processing server; and

a client component that runs on a user computing device in association with or as part of a browser program and communicates with the error processing server over a computer network;

wherein the client component is responsive to detection of the unavailability of a target web page requested by the browser program by sending a request to the error processing server, and the error processing server is responsive to the request by using an address of the target web page to select an alternate object to be displayed by the browser program in place of the requested target web page;

whereby the system enables an alternate object that is associated with the requested web page to be presented to a user when the requested web page is unavailable.

12. The system of Claim 11, wherein the error processing server further causes the browser program to display messages identifying the sources of the alternate objects.

13. The system of Claim 11, wherein the error processing server accesses a table that maps specific URLs to URLs of alternate objects, and uses the table to select the alternate objects to present to users.

14. The system of Claim 13, wherein the table maps URLs to substitute URLs.

15. The system of Claim 13, wherein the table maps URLs to related URLs.

16. The system of Claim 13, further comprising an analysis component that analyzes clickstreams of users and associated web pages to generate URL-to-URL mappings included within the table.

17. The system of Claim 11, wherein the error processing server compares a target URL supplied by a user to URLs contained within a clickstream of the user to evaluate whether the user mis-entered the target URL.

18. The system of Claim 11, wherein the error processing server additionally generates the selected alternate object in response to at least some requests for alternate pages.

19. The system of Claim 11, wherein the client component requests an alternate object from the error processing server in response to detecting at least a 404 error.

20. The system of Claim 11, wherein the client component requests an alternate object from the error processing server in response to detecting at least a timeout error.

21. The system of Claim 11, wherein the client component is a browser plug-in.

22. A method of handling errors associated with browser requests for displayable objects, the method comprising:

detecting, at a user computing device that runs a web browser, that a browser request for a target object at a target URL has resulted in an error of a defined type;

looking up an alternate URL based at least in-part on the target URL, said alternate URL specifying a location of an alternate object; and

responding to the error by doing at least one of the following (1) retrieving the alternate object from the alternate URL and displaying the alternate object within the web browser, (2) presenting, on the user computing device, a link to the alternate object to allow a user to select the alternate object for display.

23. The method of Claim 22, wherein the method comprises retrieving the alternate object, and displaying the alternate object within the web browser together with a message indicating at least a source of the alternate object.

24. The method of Claim 22, wherein the error of a defined type is a 404 error.

25. The method of Claim 22, wherein the error of a defined type is a timeout error in which host of the target object fails to respond to the browser request within a selected time period.

26. The method of Claim 22, wherein the alternate object is a cached version of the target object.

27. The method of Claim 22, wherein the alternate object is an object retrieved from a URL that is deemed to be a replacement URL for the target object.

28. The method of Claim 22, wherein the step of looking up an alternate URL comprises accessing a URL-to-URL mapping table that maps specific URLs to URLs of alternate objects.

29. The method of Claim 28, wherein the step of accessing the URL-to-URL mapping table comprises accessing a cached version of the table stored on the user computing device.

30. The method of Claim 22, wherein the step of looking up an alternate URL is performed by a remote error processing server in response to a message received from the user computing device.